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## PROBABLE DEVELOPMENTS IN THAILAND

*Submitted by the***DIRECTOR OF CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE**

*The following organizations participated in the preparation of this estimate: The Central Intelligence Agency and the intelligence organizations of the Departments of State, the Army, the Navy, the Air Force, and The Joint Staff.*

*Concurred in by the***INTELLIGENCE ADVISORY COMMITTEE**

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## PROBABLE DEVELOPMENTS IN THAILAND

### THE PROBLEM

To analyze the political, military, and economic strengths and weaknesses of Thailand and to estimate probable developments in Thailand over the next few years, with particular reference to the stability and effectiveness of the government, the internal Communist threat, and the will and ability of the Thai to withstand external Communist pressure or aggression.

### CONCLUSIONS

1. Thailand is relatively stable politically, with power closely held by top military and police leaders. Although inefficiency and corruption limit governmental effectiveness the Communist movement is weak and no undercurrents of serious unrest or dissatisfaction are apparent in the population. Thailand's future stability and orientation will be largely determined by external developments, in particular by US and Communist courses of action in Southeast Asia. (Paras. 7-10, 20, 45)

2. Thailand's security forces are adequate for maintaining internal security under present conditions. Even with a large increase in foreign financial and technical assistance, Thailand will not be able to develop security forces adequate to discourage a major Communist invasion or to delay more than briefly such an invasion if launched. Nevertheless with adequate assistance, and particularly if advisory personnel were to work with the Thai at the small unit level, the security forces could probably develop a capability to police Thailand's borders with reason-

able effectiveness, to cope with guerrilla or other subversive activities within the country, and to repel small-scale Communist armed incursions. (Paras. 34, 37)

3. We believe that during the next few years the Communists are unlikely openly to invade Thailand with Chinese Communist or other identifiable Communist forces. They will, however, attempt to enhance Communist capabilities and influence in Thailand by: (a) developing internal subversive organizations and by using their capabilities in neighboring countries for progressive infiltration of Communist guerrillas and agents, and (b) bringing to bear diplomatic and propaganda pressures against the Thai Government in an effort to weaken its alignment with the US. (Para. 46)

4. We believe that at least during the next year or so, the present ruling group will respond to the initial stages of Communist pressures by pulling closer together and will continue its firm anti-Communist stand. Moreover, effective action by the Manila Pact powers in re-

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sponse to an appeal for assistance from Laos, Cambodia, or South Vietnam would greatly increase Thai confidence in continuing to stand with the West. (Paras. 40, 45)

5. On the other hand the extension of Communist control to all of Vietnam might stimulate doubts in Thailand over the wisdom of continuing a Western orientation. Communist control of Laos or Cambodia, by whatever means it were achieved, would significantly increase Communist subversive capabilities in Thailand and would almost certainly weaken Thai confidence in their Western alignment. (Para. 47)

6. In the latter situation, the Thai Government would probably remain aligned with the West only if it remained convinced that the US had both the willing-

ness and the ability to defend Thailand against Communist aggression. If an invasion in force should occur, Thai resistance would probably be short-lived, unless US forces were speedily brought to bear. Furthermore, the Thai might come to believe that their close alignment with the US would not deter a Communist invasion of their country and might even give further incentive to the Communists to invade Thailand. They might feel that even if the US were clearly willing to defend Thailand, it would not be able to do so without protracted and large-scale warfare on Thai soil. If the Thai leaders estimated the situation in this way, they would probably be disposed to reject US assistance and to seek some sort of accommodation with the Communists. (Para. 48)

## DISCUSSION

### I. PRESENT SITUATION AND CURRENT TRENDS

#### Political Situation

7. Political power in Thailand is held by a small group of military leaders who, along with a few civilians, seized power in 1947. The three principal members of the ruling group are Field Marshal Phibun Songkhram, Prime Minister; General Sarit Thanarat, Commander-in-Chief of the Army; and General Phao Sriyanon, Police Director General. Prime Minister Phibun draws strength from support within the armed services probably including the chiefs of the air force and navy, from his prestige as one of the most important and durable Thai leaders, and from his ability to control factionalism within the coup group.

8. The ruling group exercises its political control through the organs of a constitutional monarchy: the King, the National Assembly,

and the Cabinet. Although the monarchy is important as a symbol of national unity the King exercises little influence. The half-elected and half-appointed House of Representatives is completely dominated by the ruling group and acts largely as a rubber stamp for the latter's legislation. The Cabinet is the mechanism through which political power is exercised. All members of the Cabinet, except the ministers of foreign affairs and justice, are ranking officers in the security forces who hold positions concurrently in their respective services.

9. Important positions in government are allocated on the basis of membership in or close support of the 1947 coup group. The appointment of unqualified and often corrupt officials contributes to the inefficiency of the Thai Government. Many of the coup group have used their positions to enhance their personal fortunes. This concentration of power and of opportunities for personal profit

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tends to engender low morale among the civil servants, and causes resentment among the small educated class in Thailand. Opposition to the government may grow considerably over an extended period. Dissatisfied elements are presently unorganized, however, and are unlikely to become politically effective so long as the Communist threat remains acute.

10. The military leaders now exercising power in Thailand will probably retain control for at least the next few years. They will probably take some steps to improve governmental administration and to reduce the more blatant forms of corruption, but will do little to increase popular participation in government. We do not believe any of the present leaders will in the next few years upset the present political balance by attempting to seize power by force. There are apparently no major policy differences within the group. The economic rewards of office, even though divided, appear adequate for all leaders, and there appears to be a general reluctance to risk loss of position by precipitating a struggle for monopoly control of state power. Moreover, factions within the ruling group are held together in some measure by the continued existence of the Communist threat as well as the knowledge that political instability caused by contending "palace" groups might jeopardize US assistance. Army Commander Sarit and Police Director General Phao, leaders of the two major factions within the 1947 coup group, apparently are engaged in continuous though quiet maneuvering to achieve the dominant power position. In this contest General Sarit apparently can count on the loyalty of the bulk of the army, the largest of the Thai armed forces. On the other hand, General Phao controls the National Police and has the support of a faction within the navy. The fact that these two contenders for power feel free to leave their country at different times indicates that rivalries are not intense.

11. A basic political apathy in Thailand accounts in part for the absence of demands for popular political participation. Among the predominantly rural population primary loyalties are to the family and interests seldom

extend beyond the village community. There is general approbation of the present regime despite criticism of specific instances of economic mismanagement and graft.

12. The traditions and practices of Buddhism contribute to the passivity of the Thai population and provide an important stabilizing factor in Thai political life. The Buddhist monks exercise a position of considerable influence in the community, sanctioned by the king and government. The government, seeking to utilize this influence, has encouraged efforts by Buddhist leaders to demonstrate the incompatibility of Communism and Buddhism.

13. While political apathy and passivity serve to limit the development of legal or subversive opposition, these characteristics of the Thai people will also restrict the effectiveness of any government efforts to generate active popular support for emergency defense programs.

### The Economic Situation

14. Thailand has a basically stable, and gradually expanding agricultural economy and is free from population pressure. Its population of predominantly small landowners is satisfied with existing institutions and enjoys better living conditions than exist in neighboring countries. Thailand's principal current economic problems are: (a) disposing of a large surplus of low-grade rice; (b) checking the deterioration in its balance of payments position; and (c) financing increasingly heavy budgets to support government capital investment and the expansion of military forces. All three problems are closely linked since rice exports normally provide 70 percent of foreign exchange receipts and are the main source of fiscal support. In addition, Thailand's economic situation has suffered from government inefficiency.

15. Defense expenditures already absorb 36 percent of budgeted funds and at least 5 percent of total national income. Because of the recent decline in rice earnings, Thailand can finance heavier defense expenditures only by increasing the budgetary deficits that have been growing since 1950. Thailand has re-

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requested that the US supply \$36,841,000 for budgetary aid during 1955, of which \$30,431,000 would be for defense and \$6,410,000 for economic development. This amount would supplement already budgeted expenditures of \$271,000,000 for 1955. US funds would thus finance 12 percent of the total planned Thai budget for 1955.

16. Beginning in 1953 Thailand has been experiencing balance of payments difficulties due to reduced earnings from exports at a time when imports were increasing. Its gold and foreign exchange assets, which amounted to approximately \$350,000,000 at the end of 1952, were reduced by \$50,000,000 in 1953 and by another \$50,000,000 in the first nine months of 1954. While it has been successful in checking this drain on its assets in the third quarter of the year, largely through a reduction in nonessential imports, its balance of payments may be a continuing problem because of the unfavorable outlook for increased earnings from exports in the immediate future and the need for a high level of capital goods imports for its development program.

17. The chief determinant of Thailand's economic outlook is its rice marketing prospects, which in turn depend upon world supply and demand. Thailand's present marketing difficulties have been due in part to the unusually high percentage of poor quality rice in last year's crop and to the government's current unrealistic pricing policy. Thailand can undoubtedly continue to rely on rice as the main source of export earnings and fiscal support. Nevertheless, on the basis of present trends and projections, earnings and revenue from rice are more likely to fall slightly or stabilize than to increase.

18. With its own financial resources, Thailand can probably maintain a level of investment sufficient to keep up with population growth. The government, however, would probably have to rely on external assistance to finance a higher level of defense expenditures or undertake rapid economic development. The Thai Government has recently indicated its desire to borrow \$153,600,000 from the US or the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development for

income producing economic development projects.

19. Although economic conditions are depressed in the northeast, the most likely target for Communist penetration, dissatisfaction with low living standards has not been sufficient to cause serious unrest. Moreover, both the Thai Government and the US Government through its aid funds, have given increased attention to the area through health, education, and agricultural improvement programs which appear to have been effective.

### Subversive Activities and Trends

20. Communism has not made a successful appeal to the Thai. The relatively good economic conditions in Thailand, the absence of colonialism as an issue, general political apathy, and the suppressive measures of the government have combined to limit membership in the illegal Thai Communist Party to an estimated 100 people.

21. The Communists have had somewhat greater success among the three million Chinese residents in Thailand. The Chinese Communist Party in Thailand, an illegal organization operationally distinct from the Thai Communist Party, has from 2,000 to 5,000 members and possibly 100,000 sympathizers. The majority of the other Chinese appear to be neutral because of apathy, dislike of Communism, or uncertainty over the future. The Chinese Communists exploit the attachment of Chinese to their homeland and the dissatisfaction resulting from the Thai government's efforts to reduce the dominant position of the Chinese in the Thai economy. Because of the desire of the resident Chinese for protection of their interests, the relative weakness of the National Government of China has in some measure increased the appeal of the Communists. The Communists would almost certainly be able to develop more support among the Chinese residents if the Communists achieved further successes in Indochina or if the National Government on Taiwan suffered further diminution of its international stature, particularly if Communist China were admitted to the UN. How-

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ever, unless Communist control of Thailand should appear to be imminent, either through invasion or subversion, we believe it unlikely that the Chinese community as a whole would swing from its present position of neutrality to one of active support for the Communist cause.

22. The capabilities of both the Thai and Chinese Communist Parties are limited at present. Their main activities appear to be organizing and recruiting cadres, sending students to Communist China, and conducting propaganda which is now largely clandestine. However, the Chinese Communists control labor in key industries such as rice-milling and stevedoring, and thus have a potential for disrupting transportation and economic activity. Pro-Communist elements among the Vietnamese minority provide some supplies to the Viet Minh in Laos, and Chinese guerrillas from Malaya practice extortion on Chinese businessmen and plantation labor in the southern Thai provinces.

23. In their search for a leader and for issues to increase instability in Thailand, the Communists appear to have reached an agreement with former Thai Prime Minister Pridi Phan-amyang who recently broadcast an appeal over the Peiping radio to the Thai people to join with him in overthrowing the "corrupt, US-dominated Thai Government." Although he was the leading popular figure in Thailand in the period immediately after World War II, Pridi does not appear to have any organized backing in Thailand at this time. His support has diminished steadily since his exile following the 1947 coup and his popular following appears to have been further reduced by his apparent association with Communist China. However, it is possible that some dissatisfied though unorganized elements in the population might seek or follow his leadership. In particular, many individuals in the small educated class who have become increasingly dissatisfied with the authoritarian and corrupt nature of the present government might look to Pridi to lead a reform movement. In addition, Pridi probably has many followers in northeastern Thailand where less favorable

economic conditions tend to increase dissatisfaction with the government.

24. While there is no conclusive evidence at this time that the Communists intend to use Pridi in efforts to organize armed rebellion within Thailand, we believe this is a possible course of action. Communist funds and personnel might be made available to Pridi and a base of operations supplied him in Yunnan Province of Communist China or in Laos. From such vantage points, Pridi might dispatch trained cadres into Thailand to stir up discontent and rebellion. This threat is one which should offer no serious trouble unless Thailand's rulers engage in intragroup strife. We do not foresee any circumstances in which the Communists might try to extend their influence by promoting a "Greater Thai State" based on the Thai Autonomous Area<sup>1</sup> in Yunnan Province and combining the racially related Thais of northern Vietnam, Laos, Thailand, and Burma.

25. The community of from 75,000 to 100,000 Vietnamese concentrated in northeastern Thailand is a potential threat to Thai security. The bulk of these people are Viet Minh sympathizers. They have provided limited support for the Viet Minh cause in Indochina. It is difficult to estimate the extent to which this community would respond if Communist agents tried to turn its efforts to operations against the Thai Government. Nevertheless we believe the potential threat is significant because of the size of the community, its location adjacent to the border of Laos and Cambodia, and the difficulties which the Thai police would face in attempting to control this large area. The Thai Government is currently negotiating for the return to their homeland of approximately 50,000 who are post-World War II refugees and among whom the incidence of Viet Minh sympathy is greatest. If the evacuation plan should fail the

<sup>1</sup> The Thai Autonomous Area in the southernmost part of Yunnan, established by the Chinese Communists in 1953, is one of more than a hundred such areas in Yunnan, several of which included significant numbers of Thai people. Its principal purpose appears to have been to assure Chinese control over essentially non-Chinese people.

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government may attempt an alternative plan which calls for moving the bulk of the Vietnamese away from border areas.

26. During the next few years the Thai Government will almost certainly be able to counter any attempt to seize the government by force providing the Viet Minh and/or Communist Chinese armies do not launch an invasion of Thailand. However, the Thai Government probably will not be able to prevent further Communist organization within the Chinese community and will have difficulty in detecting preparations for more extensive subversive activity. Moreover, should Communist power be extended through Laos, Cambodia, or Burma the subversive capability of the Communists would probably grow as increased numbers of the Chinese community supported the Communists. Should the Vietnamese remain concentrated in the depressed area of northeastern Thailand and should the government continue to neglect the Thai in this area, the potential for Communist exploitation would increase. If the Communists should gain sufficient supporters, possibly by utilizing Pridi and his Free Thai movement, and decide to initiate a campaign of subversion and/or guerrilla warfare in the northeast area, the Thai Government probably would not be able completely to suppress such activity.

### Security Forces

27. The Royal Thai Army, with a strength of about 80,000 is composed of nine regimental combat teams, one infantry regiment, one cavalry brigade, one AAA regiment, three independent artillery battalions, and four independent cavalry battalions. The Thai Army could do little more than briefly delay the forward advance of any Communist invasion in force.

28. The preliminary military expansion program, the major portion of which has been approved by JUSMAG and which is now being carried out, contemplates an Army increase to 106,000 men and provides for the activation of a tenth RCT and the expansion of three division headquarters. This plan, if fully implemented, would result in some increase in

effectiveness and in improved unit mobility. Should present Army units be reorganized into divisions, a period of from 12 to 18 months would be required before units could function effectively at the divisional level.

29. The Royal Thai Air Force has a total personnel strength of approximately 13,500 and a total aircraft strength of about 340 including about 110 F8F's. The F8F fighter squadrons, the best units in the Air Force in terms of morale, personnel selection, and training, now have the capability of mounting an average of 35 to 40 ground support sorties per day for two to three weeks. However, this capability could not be exercised effectively against enemy air opposition nor could it be operative over a prolonged period under combat conditions. The Air Force, lacking jets and radar equipment, has a negligible capability for defending Thailand from air attack.

30. The capability of the Thai Air Force for air defense will remain negligible at least through 1955, but its tactical support capability will continue to improve gradually. Under JUSMAG-approved plans present squadrons will be strengthened by the integration of additional F8F piston fighter-bomber aircraft and by the addition, although probably not before the end of 1955, of one jet fighter-bomber squadron.

31. The great majority of Air Force and Army personnel are apparently loyal and patriotic. Pay and living conditions of the enlisted personnel are fair by Thai standards. Officer morale, on the other hand, and the development of a competent professional officer corps, are adversely affected by the involvement of the armed forces in politics. Officer assignments are determined more by political affiliations than by professional competence. Moreover, in the case of politically favored officers, low pay is supplemented by gifts from special funds and, in the case of important officers, by lucrative posts within government-controlled business enterprises.

32. The Royal Thai Navy has approximately 16,000 officers and men, including 2,600 marines, and a miscellaneous collection of vessels acquired from Japanese, Italian, British, and

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US sources. Of these only two frigates, 14 patrol craft of varying size, and six small mine layers and mine sweepers are potentially suitable for ASW, escort, or limited mine warfare missions. The two frigates were integrated in UN forces operating in Korea waters. The Navy is deficient in planning, and also lacks adequate leadership, combat experience, and preventive maintenance. Although its overall capabilities and effectiveness are limited, they are now increasing, owing to the influence of JUSMAG training and advice, and supply of badly needed equipment and spare parts. Morale is in general fair, although adversely affected by factions which exist in the officer corps.

33. As a result of its complicity in the abortive coup of 1951, the Thai Navy remained suspect and its development was neglected. Appointment of a staunch supporter of Phibun as commander-in-chief, widespread officer dismissals, and the passage of time, however, have served to partially restore it to a position of trust.

34. The National Police Force, with a personnel strength of about 40,000 is a quasi-military force responsible for internal security, border control, and the collection of intelligence. In time of war the police would supplement the army in defending the country. The border defense units of the Thai police are being trained in defense and guerrilla warfare tactics. However, because earlier standards of training were low, the present capabilities for border control are still inadequate. Although their venality and involvement in local politics somewhat hinders their effectiveness, the Thai police probably are capable at present of maintaining internal security. However, their intelligence capabilities, communications, and mobility are probably not sufficient to cope with a possible increase in externally directed subversion.

35. No major change is anticipated in the strength of the police, although their effectiveness is improving with increased training. The police have begun to organize and train a reserve force, known as the Territorial Defense Volunteer Force, to assist in maintenance

of internal security in the event of an emergency.

36. The mobilization potential of the Thai, now and in the future, appears to be limited more by problems of finance and technical competence than by manpower ceilings. It is probable that about one-half of the 4 to 5 million males in the military service age brackets would meet military physical requirements. Since the bulk of the labor force is engaged in agriculture and related occupations, a diversion of a substantial proportion of this group to military service would result in a fall in agricultural production. While this would not affect Thai self-sufficiency in food it would reduce the revenues that the government receives from exports. Despite the efforts of US military advisors, the modernization of the Thai armed forces has proceeded slowly and the Thai still lack officers and specialists necessary to carry on an extensive training program of their own or to carry out the functions of higher staff levels. Thailand will continue to be dependent on external sources of supply for virtually all items of equipment except food and clothing.

37. Even with a large increase in foreign financial and technical assistance, Thailand will not be able to develop security forces adequate to discourage a major Communist invasion or to delay more than briefly such an invasion if launched. Nevertheless, with adequate assistance, and particularly if advisory personnel were to work with the Thai at the small unit level, the security forces could probably develop sufficient strength to police Thailand's borders with reasonable effectiveness, to cope with guerrilla or other subversive activities within the country, and to repel small-scale Communist armed incursions into Thailand.

### External Relations

38. The Thai Government is pro-US in its orientation. It contributed forces to the UN command in Korea, and has responded to the increased Communist threat in Southeast Asia by identifying itself even more closely with the West. So far the present government has not adopted past Thai tactics of

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removing Thailand from the conflict by accommodation. The ruling group has apparently become convinced that Communists and Communism are dangerous to the security of its own position as well as to Thai national aspirations and way of life. The Communist threat was forcefully brought home, at least to the Thai leaders, by the Viet Minh invasion of Laos and by the subsequent French defeat and acceptance of an armistice which recognized a Communist government in North Vietnam.

39. As the concern of the Thai Government has increased, it has sought by various external means to bolster Thai security. The Thai Government with the support of the US has twice approached the UN seeking the establishment of a Peace Observation Commission subcommittee to observe border conditions along the Mekong River. A Soviet veto blocked this proposal in the Security Council and to date action in the General Assembly has been deferred by French and British opposition. In addition, the Thai Government has supported the concept of "united action" to deal with Communist aggression in Asia and has sought increased military assistance from the US for developing Thai armed forces.

40. We believe that Thai conviction of US willingness to defend Thailand, including the commitment of US forces if necessary, is the crucial element in Thailand's Western orientation and in its will to oppose further Communist advances. Thai support for the idea of a regional security organization was motivated largely by an expectation that a firm US commitment of support would be involved. Thus there is a certain degree of dissatisfaction with the Manila Pact because it does not contain NATO-type commitments from the US. In any event Thai judgment on the reliability of the security provided by this pact will largely be determined by subsequent US actions with respect to a mutual assistance program and manifestations of US determination to directly engage its own forces in defense of the area. Effective action by the Manila Pact powers in response to an appeal for assistance from Laos, Cambodia, or South

Vietnam would greatly increase Thai confidence in continuing to stand with the West.

41. Relations between Thailand, Laos, and Cambodia have been disturbed in the past by border disputes and complicated by the tendency of all three governments to deal indirectly with each other through French channels. Moreover, some Laotians and Cambodians fear that the Thai have expansionist aims. Some elements in Thailand probably have been in communication with, if not giving support to, certain of the non-Communist dissident leaders in Cambodia and to the dissident Laotian Prince Phetsarath who has been living in exile in Thailand. Thai relations with Burma are clouded by a history of past conflicts and more recently by border difficulties stemming from activities of the Karens, Shans, and the Chinese Nationalist remnants. Moreover, while the Thai are suspicious of the socialist orientation of the Burmese Government, the Burmese on their part tend to regard the Thai Government as corrupt and untrustworthy.

42. Largely as a result of a general fear of further Communist aggression, the Thai have recently taken some steps to improve relations with their immediate neighbors. Good-will missions have been exchanged with Laos, Cambodia, and Burma. Thailand permitted the passage of military supplies to Laos when the Viet Minh threatened that country, made a token shipment of arms to Cambodia in 1953, and has recently offered Thai facilities to aid in training Cambodian police. The Thai assisted in the international efforts to remove the Chinese irregular forces from Burma and joint Thai-Burmese measures are being taken to control border traffic.

43. Thai relations with India remain cool. The Thai resent Nehru's pretension to speak for independent Asia. The Thai believe they have little in common with Indonesia, and suspicions have recently been aroused by reports that Indonesian agitators have been responsible for a revival of political activity in the predominantly Malay population in the southern provinces of Thailand. Thai relations with the Philippines, although correct, have never been close.

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44. Although Thailand re-established diplomatic relations with Nationalist China in 1946 and continues to have relations with the National Government on Taiwan, Thai fears of the large Chinese minority as well as of external Chinese Communist pressures preclude close cooperation with Taiwan despite the anti-Communist orientation of the Thai Government.

## II. ESTIMATE OF FUTURE DEVELOPMENTS

45. We believe that Thailand's stability will not be adversely affected by internal forces during the next few years. The present ruling group probably will respond to the initial stages of Communist pressures by pulling closer together and will continue its anti-Communist stand. Thailand's future stability and orientation will, therefore, be largely determined by external developments, in particular by US and Communist courses of action in Southeast Asia.

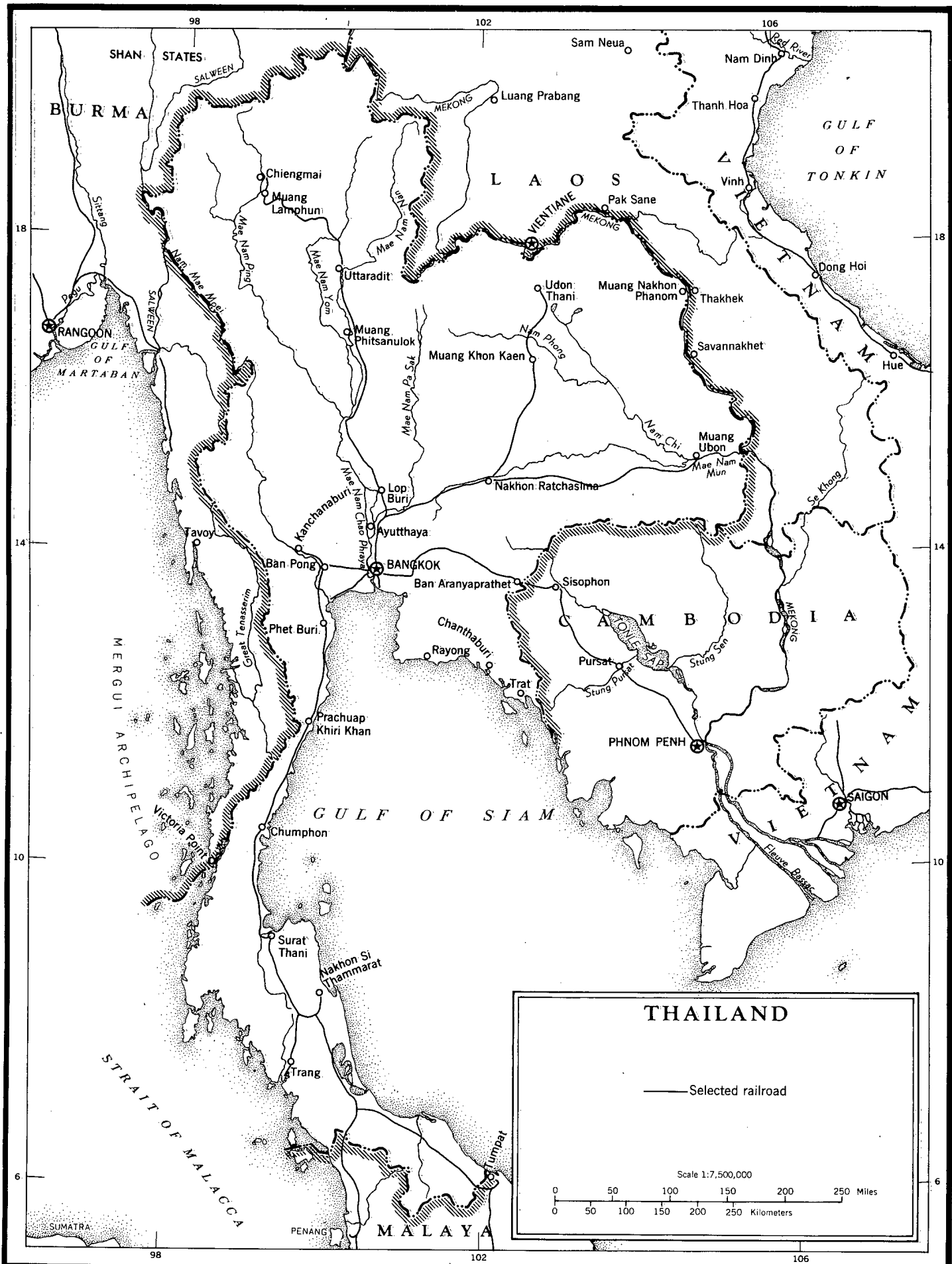
46. During the next few years, we believe the Communists are unlikely openly to invade Thailand with Chinese Communist or other identifiable Communist forces. They will, however, attempt to enhance Communist capabilities and influence in Thailand by: (a) developing internal subversive organizations and by using their capabilities in neighboring countries for progressive infiltration of Communist guerrillas and agents; and (b)

bringing to bear diplomatic and propaganda pressures against the Thai Government in an effort to weaken its alignment with the US.

47. The extension of Communist control to all of Vietnam might stimulate doubts in Thailand over the wisdom of continuing a Western orientation. Communist control of Laos or Cambodia, by whatever means it were achieved, would significantly increase Communist subversive capabilities in Thailand and would almost certainly weaken Thai confidence in their Western alignment.

48. In the latter situation, the Thai Government would probably remain aligned with the West only if it remained convinced that the US had both the willingness and the ability to defend Thailand against Communist aggression. If an invasion in force should occur, Thai resistance would probably be short-lived, unless US forces were speedily brought to bear. Furthermore, the Thai might come to believe that their close alignment with the US would not deter a Communist invasion of their country and might even give further incentive to the Communists to invade Thailand. They might feel that even if the US were clearly willing to defend Thailand, it would not be able to do so without protracted and large-scale warfare on Thai soil. If the Thai leaders estimated the situation in this way, they would probably be disposed to reject US assistance and to seek some sort of accommodation with the Communists.

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